

**TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION
OF MALAYSIAN SMALL TOWNS: CASE STUDY OF
LUMUT, PERAK**

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UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

2018

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by

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**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

June 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am most thankful to Prof. Dr. Badaruddin Mohamed, my supervisor cum mentor, for having inspired, motivated and guided me throughout the course of my studies. His mode of supervision is exemplary and I owe my continued self-development as a student, albeit rather late in life, to his unique and innovative mode of mentoring. In short, he enriched my life. For their caring, understanding and inspiring spirit, and for always being there for us, students, whether young or advanced in years, I wish to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to all the staff of the School of Housing, Building and Planning, especially Prof. Ir. Muhyuddin Ramli, Prof. Dr. Abu Hassan Abu Bakar, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmad Puad Mat Som, Mr. Jamil Jusuh, and Puan Normah Ismail. I would also like to record my heart-felt thanks for the camaraderie and support of my course mates. Finally, I would like to thank the following helpful and generous people for going out of their way in giving me their valuable time to conduct my survey interviews: Mr Mohamad Nazri Hassan (Director of Operations, Outward Bound Malaysia), Ms Carmen Chin (Picador Lot Enterprise & Art Gallery), Miss Asiah bt. Othman (Lumut Waterfront Villa Management Corporation), Lt. Cdr.(R) Teoh Han Seong BCK (Super Clean Holiday & Tour), Mr Hamat Kamis b. Abu Sahit (Pengkulu Mukim Lumut), Mr Muhamad Ezuddin (Manjung Town Council Tourism), Mr Mohd. Ghani (Manager, Hotel Putra), and others, including tourists and locals, too numerous to be mentioned here. I would also like to say a big thank you to the STRC team members who valiantly and successfully conducted a Focus Group Discussion and an Opinion Survey in Lumut and Pulau Pangkor to support and validate the data obtained in my case study. They were Prof. Dr. Mohamed Badaruddin, Dr. Shida Irwana Omar,

Mr. Noor Azman Azmi, Miss Tay Kai Xin, Mrs Nurbaidura bt Salim, Miss Long Fatimah, Mrs. Mageswari Ranjanthran, Mrs. Nur Yuhainis Amirudin, Mrs. Safura Ismail, and Dr. Ahmad Batat. My heart-felt thanks goes to Miss Long Fatimah who gallantly helped me in various important aspects. Last but not least, my deep-felt gratitude goes to Miss Tay Kai Xin who helped me tremendously with the essential finishing touches. To all, a hearty thank you. To all, a hearty thank you.

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PEMBANGUNAN PELANCONGAN DAN PEMULIHAN BANDAR-BANDAR KECIL MALAYSIA: KAJIAN KES LUMUT, PERAK

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini merupakan suatu langkah untuk mengadakan satu senarai strategi pembangunan pelancongan yang berkesan bagi membangkitkan semula bandar-bandar kecil di Malaysia. Ia akan cuba mengatasi masalah kemerosotan bandar. Walaupun negara kita bertujuan untuk mencapai taraf negara yang telah membangun pada tahun 2020, sebilangan besar antara bandar-bandar yang lama di negara kita berada di dalam keadaan yang merosot dengan ditimpa isu-isu sosial, ekonomi dan yang berkenaan dengan alam sekitar. Kemerosotan bandar merupakan masalah yang serius oleh kerana ia berkait dengan kesihatan, gaya hidup dan mata pencarian rakyat. Masalah ini merupakan perkara yang penting dan mendesak. Kajian ini mencadangkan agar strategi-strategi pembangunan pelancongan digunakan untuk membangkitkan semula bandar-bandar yang telah merosot. Untuk tujuan ini, satu senarai yang mengandungi 10 buah strategi pembangunan pelancongan telah dipilih. Strategi-strategi berkenaan adalah termasuk: (a) Menaikkan taraf pasar tani dan pasar malam; (b) Menguatkan inisiatif-inisiatif perumahan; dan (c) Memajukan berbagai jenis daya penarik pelancongan yang tiada bandingannya. Suatu kajian kes telah diadakan di Bandar Lumut untuk memastikan sama ada strategi-strategi ini didapati berkesan serta memberikan hasil yang hajati atau tidak apabila diaplikasikan dalam keadaan tempatan. Kajian ini berbentuk kajian kualitatif dan satu senarai soalan digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data melalui temuduga selepas sebuah kajian rintis telah dijalankan. Kemudian data yang diperolehi dianalisiskan. Kesimpulan yang dicapai telah disenaraikan dibawah setiap 10

strategi itu. Sebagai contoh, strategi pasar tani didapati berfaedah kepada peroses membangkitkan semula bandar-bandar yang telah merosot daripada segi sosial dan ekonomi. Strategi pembangunan perumahan boleh mengelakkan penduduk-penduduk bandar daripada berpindah ke tempat lain dan sebaliknya boleh membawa masuk bakal penduduk untuk bermastautin di bandar berkenaan. Selain daripada mendapati kesimpulan yang dicapai sebagai hasil penyesiatan, kajian ini mendapat tahu tentang beberapa implikasi berdasarkan teori dan polisi yang mempunyai kesan ketara: Contoh implikasi teori: (a) adalah menjadi wajib supaya pihak berkuasa tempatan tidak membenarkan tanah awam dimiliki oleh sesiapa yang tidak ingin membangunkan hartanya, atau yang tidak mahu memajukan hartanya sehingga harga tanah itu telah berganda; (b) sebuah bandar yang merosot harus berusaha supaya ia dapat mencapai imej sebuah bandar bersejarah serta pelancongan oleh kerana keadaan ini akan membantu dalam peroses membangkitkan semula bandar berkenaan. Contoh implikasi polisi: (a) jikalau sesuatu bandar yang merosot ingin dibangkitkan semula, bandar itu harus memperkenalkan unsur-unsur pelancongan ke dalam infrastruktur bandar berkenaan; dan (b) sesebuah bandar yang merosot haruslah berusaha dengan tujuan menjadikan bandar itu sebuah bandar pelancongan.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION OF MALAYSIAN SMALL TOWNS: CASE STUDY OF LUMUT, PERAK

ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to identify a list of tourism development strategies that can be effective in revitalizing small Malaysian towns. It seeks to address the problem of urban decline. As the nation moves towards achieving developed nation status in 2020, many of the country's older towns are in a state of decline, involving social, economic and environmental issues. Urban decline is a serious problem as it is related to the health, lifestyle and livelihood of the citizens. Addressing this problem is, therefore, an important and urgent matter. This study proposed that the revitalization of declining towns should be accomplished by the application of tourism development strategies. Consequently, a set of 10 tourism development strategies for urban revitalization purposes was selected from the literature available. These included: (a) Enhancing farmers' market and night market; (b) Strengthening housing initiatives; and (c) Developing unique home-grown attractions; A case study was then conducted in the town of Lumut to ascertain the effectiveness and practicality of the strategies when applied under local conditions. The study was qualitative in nature and the study instrument comprised a semi-structured questionnaire. After a pilot study had been carried out to refine the questionnaire, data was collected through interviews and analysed. Important findings were listed under each of the 10 strategies. For example, Farmers' Markets were found to be advantageous to the urban revitalization process in terms of social and economic benefits while Housing Initiatives could prevent out-migration and help repopulate a declining town. This study also encountered a number

of significant theoretical implications and policy implications. One of the theoretical implications stresses that it is mandatory for local authorities to ensure that public land does not fall into the possession of people who either have no intention of developing the property or who wish to delay development while waiting for the land to appreciate in value. Another theoretical implication stresses that a declining town should conscientiously work towards achieving a tourist-historic town image as this will greatly help in the process of urban revitalization. The study also found that if a declining town wishes to be revitalized, it has to adopt certain policy implications, such as introducing tourism centric elements into its urban infrastructure. Another policy implication states that a declining town should plan and work towards becoming a tourist-oriented town.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Tourism as a Catalyst for Urban Revitalization

Since the establishment of the earliest human settlements, the town has been the place of choice where people congregate and live their lives. Today, the town faces numerous challenges, chief among them being urban sprawl. Industrial, commercial and residential areas tend to relocate farther and farther away from downtown. The townsfolk have little choice but to relocate to the suburbs for more comfortable and usually more affordable housing and a better and greener environment. It is indeed paradoxical that a town's healthy population growth can turn out to be a major cause of urban sprawl, as pointed out by Striker (2013). Urban sprawl is a double-edged sword.

Furthermore, Hoyt (2013) commented that it could be either the best thing that ever happened to growing families – or the downfall of civilization and the destruction of the environment. This imply that when the townsfolk move over to occupy the suburbs, they virtually colonize and open up the vast rural spaces that have been the preserve of farms, nature parks, primary forests, and wildlife sanctuaries. This fact has been compounded by the advent of motorized transportation which facilitates the movement of people between their homes and downtown as well as their places of work. Consequently, urban decline sets in, with the downtown losing its vitality and becoming derelict. Such a scenario gives rise to various urban problems including the growth of slums, unemployment, and urban crime. Moreover, the negative influences of sprawl have been

made worse by its encroachment on agricultural land, an enlarged carbon footprint, underutilized land, a weakened social structure, and a degraded physical environment ((Brueckner, 2001; Rokibah, 2001). Incidentally, these are the signs of urban decline.

Urban revitalization attempts to arrest the problems associated with urban decline and to revitalize townships in order to attract people back to rehabilitate the towns. Revitalization plans usually consist of creative project financing, public-private partnerships and town image promotion as the traditional initiatives. In addition to these initiatives, however, there is a strong urban revitalizing mechanism which is typical of the post-industrial era. It is tourism development. This study, therefore, attempted to contribute to this field of innovation and practice by focusing on how tourism development can play a comprehensive role in revitalizing declining towns.

In the past, towns predominantly engaged in manufacturing. Nowadays, towns actively cater to the growing consumerism lifestyle with the proliferation of shopping arcades, entertainment centres, hotels and other service industries. The towns plan for the optimum development of infrastructure and amenities with the aim of attracting wealthy residents, investors and tourists into them. These plans are often supported by cultural carnivals, special events such as conventions and local festivities to further strengthen the urban economy. With reference to these plans, Sedakat, Worthington, and Hutchison (2007) commented that such towns strategically include various forms of tourism in their revitalization initiatives in order to make them more marketable to outsiders as attractive destinations. Such unprecedented expansion of consumption and tourism has evolved the town into a recreational and entertainment centre.

This phenomenon has proven to be advantageous to the tourism industry as it has forged the steady expansion of leisure tourism in the urban areas. Simultaneously, it has benefitted the community, thus fulfilling an important bench mark as regards the sustainability of the industry. In terms of economic benefits, tourism development initiatives create jobs for the townsfolk, modernize and add to the town's infrastructure, and provide better municipal services, while utilizing the resources already available in the community (Beshiri, 2005; Cox, Murray, & Kereluik, 2004; Page, Forer, & Lawton, 1999). It is also heartening to note that many urban revitalization projects based on tourism development initiatives have been successfully implemented, especially in former small industrial towns in Britain (McCarthy, 2007). Considering the above facts, there is no reason why urban revitalization plans carried out in tandem with tourism development initiatives cannot be successfully put into practice in small Malaysian towns. This study attempted to confirm this assertion.

In the post-World War II years, it was common for towns in developed countries to decline considerably as residents and businesses relocated to rapidly-expanding suburbs. This migration out of the urban centres was especially more intensive in the U.S.A. While the out-migration to the suburbs became more acute, the downtowns lost their residents, jobs and a sense of community as public utilities and services were reduced resulting in the deterioration of businesses, residences and community institutions such as schools and churches (Keating, Krumholtz, & Star, 1996; Leinberger, 2012).

The development of this post-war urban crisis turned out to be a blessing in disguise for the tourism industry. Various urban renewal efforts had been made in attempts to reverse further suburbanization and urban decline. Huge amounts of public finances had been spent to subsidize the development of infrastructure for tourism in American downtowns. Regarding this matter, Alden (2012) pointed out that local governments should spend even more on tourism infrastructure. The closing decades of the 20th century found that tourism development, which was initially used only as a minor strategy to help regenerate derelict downtowns, had become a successful factor in urban revitalization.

1.2 The Growth of Malaysian Towns

The history of the growth and evolution of Malaysian towns has been ascribed to two, three and even four phases by various researchers (Kernal Singh Sandhu, 1961; Sendut, 1965) depending on the span of the periods surveyed. However, in order to provide a clearer and more detailed picture, this study proposes to deal with the matter within a span of five phases. The first phase began with the development of Malacca in the 15th century (Kernal Singh Sandhu, 1961). This phase saw the growth of a few small towns which the focal points of the social and political life of the Malays in the hinterland of the Malacca port had been. During the second phase, Malacca grew into an important city for commerce when products from Southeast Asia were exported to Europe. This period also saw the founding of Penang (1766) and Singapore (1819) by the British. Being the product of Eurocentric commerce, these two cities also functioned as entrepôts for Southeast Asian products bound for Western markets (Purcell, 1965; Turnbull, 1972).

The third phase covered the period of British colonial rule (1887-1956). This phase coincided with the opening of the tin-mining industry in Perak and Selangor, with Penang and Singapore functioning as busy trading towns for the British to export the tin ore, rubber and other produce. The tin-mining industry was an impetus for the growth and expansion of towns such as Taiping, Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur and Seremban (Hamzah, 1964). Furthermore, the towns of Port Weld, Teluk Anson, Klang, and Linggi grew and expanded and became prominent trading centres for the export of tin.

Incidentally, the growth of the rubber industry during this period also spurred the development of towns such as Kulim, Alor Gajah, Segamat, Keluang and Kota Tinggi. Another factor that stimulated the growth of urban centres during this period was the creation of the New Villages during the Emergency (1948-1960). A total of 559 New Villages were established under the Briggs Plan (Pryor, 1979). These New Villages, usually located in the proximity of larger towns, were known as new urban centres (Sandhu, 1964). They were ultimately absorbed by the larger towns, as in the case of Jijang, Ampang, and Sungai Way, all of which had been absorbed by Kuala Lumpur (Pryor, 1979).

During the fourth phase (1957-1969) which covered the early years of the country's independence, the nation's economy grew steadily, and was accompanied by vigorous development in the urbanization scene (Sendut, 1965; Yeoh & Hirschman, 1980). The Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA), established in 1956, also played a role in the promotion of urban settlements during this period. FELDA relocated landless farmers to suitable areas where they could practice commercial farming instead of the traditional subsistence farming. One of its more notable achievements was the

establishment of Bandar Pusat Jengka in Pahang. The successful development of Bandar Al Muktafi Billah Shah in Terengganu could also be partly attributed to FELDA.

The fifth phase of the evolution of Malaysian towns, from 1970 onwards, saw dramatic urban growth fuelled by the rise of export manufacturing. In the past, industrial production was mostly confined within national boundaries, but since the late 1960s and early 1970s, with the globalization of industrial production, manufacturing was carried out in various locations, especially in developing countries. Malaysia took advantage of this development which impacted the nation's overall economic growth as well as the urban system. Foreign multinational corporations initially began operations in the major cities and gradually moved down the urban hierarchy to the medium and smaller towns.

Furthermore, industrial estates were established in many areas, especially along the western industrial corridor in West Malaysia. Sustained strong economic growth further spurred urban social-economic development to such an extent that the impacts of globalization became evident in the sturdy progress of urbanization since 1970 (Hirschman, 1976; J. B. Ooi, 1976; Pryor, 1973). Another important factor that paradoxically improved the economy and hastened urban growth was the severe recession of 1985-1986 which had been triggered by a steep decline of rubber and palm oil prices. The government reacted by attracting foreign manufacturing corporations, especially from Japan, to relocate into the country.

This strategy worked and by 1989, manufacturing had replaced agriculture as the mainstay of the economy. Since the multinational firms were export-oriented, they tended

to locate in urban areas where seaports, airports and other infrastructure were already available. The most preferred locations were the metropolitan areas of Penang, Kuala Lumpur and Johor Bahru. Consequently, these cities began to sprawl. Regarding this matter, Abdullah (2012) pointed out that new industrial towns sprang up in areas around George Town, such as Bayan Lepas, Perai, Sungai Petani and Kulim. Similarly, Port Klang, Bangi and Shah Alam grew up around Kuala Lumpur. Additionally, Pasir Gudang and Masai developed around Johor Bahru.

1.2.1 The Decline of Malaysian Towns

The rise of the manufacturing sector in tandem with the rapid urban growth in the 1980s provided the fertile conditions for urban sprawl which continued to the present day and is expected to extend into the future. The many industrial estates that developed around the primary towns such as Penang, Kuala Lumpur and Johor Bahru, morphed into new towns. People from the rural areas migrated into these towns to work in the factories.

The towns began to expand tremendously in the 1990s and they were located progressively further away from the primary towns. In the Klang Valley, for example, these new urban areas included Subang Jaya, Shah Alam, Bangi and Klang. New towns, however, continued to appear. Pavithar (2017) reported Kwasa Damansara, a model township that had been planned to be sustainable, liveable and safe, would be developed in the near future. In Penang the new urban areas included Bayan Lepas, Minden and Batu Kawan outside George Town while in the south, were the new towns of Skudai and Pasir Gudang near Johor Bahru.

There is evidence that urban sprawl will continue to spread in many other locations. For example, towards fulfilling its objective to become a global city, Kuala Lumpur will continue to expand such as by redeveloping the iconic Pudu Jail, the old Sungai Besi military airport, the Rubber Research Institute in Sungai Buluh, and the Kuala Lumpur Financial District. New areas to be urbanised would include Sepang, Hulu Langat and Kuala Langat. In the north, it is perceived that urban sprawl will reach out to cover the area located between Seberang Perai and northern Perak. To the south, in the Iskandar Development Region, sprawl is spreading towards Pontian and Tanjung Pelepas (Abdullah, 2012).

1.2.2 Causes of Urban Decline in Malaysia

In Malaysian urban areas, migrations of residents to the suburbs in search of healthier and greener living spaces, away from the pollution and traffic congestion of downtown, is a common occurrence. This phenomenon of urban sprawl has been gaining momentum especially in the older townships. An example of this phenomenon had been recorded in the Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan:

In parallel with the decline of the City Centre residential population, there has been a commensurate drop in residential land area from 523 hectares in 1980 to 288 hectares in 2000. The decline in residential land use in the City Centre is due to the development of some of the older housing areas into offices and other commercial uses. In addition to the areas of dilapidated housing in the City Centre, there are many older, low density housing areas occupying land which has a high

potential commercial value. Pressures will remain on these remaining pockets of residential land to convert to more profitable land use, which, in turn, could lead to a further reduction in the inner city residential population (City Hall Kuala Lumpur, 2003, sec. 12.2.3b).

As with the U.S.A. and other western countries, urban sprawl has also brought about urban decline in Malaysian urban centres. Besides this issue, there are numerous other causes of urban decline. Among them are, ironically, the side effects of progress and development. For example, several Malaysian towns have been alienated from the main national transport artery when new highways were constructed. Even today, these towns are bypassed by most commercial and passenger vehicles with the result that travellers rarely come into town, thus negatively impacting the restaurant and retail businesses. Since its completion in the 1980s, the North-South Expressway (NSE) that connects Kayu Hitam to Johor Baru has mostly taken over the functions of the old North-South Federal Highway (NSFH) (“Plus Malaysia Berhad,” 2014). As a result, it has an adverse effect on a string of old townships that are connected by the NSFH which actually passes through the towns. Furthermore, motorists tend to avoid driving into these older towns because their narrow streets have become congested thus prompting them to use the more efficient and time-saving NSE.

The numerous towns that have been negatively affected include Jitra, Gurun, Sungai Petani, Kepala Batas, Tikam Batu, Nibong Tebal, Bagan Serai, Padang Rengas, Kuala Kangsar, Sungai Siput, Chemor, Gopeng, Kampar, Tapah, Bidor, Slim River, and Tanjung Malim. Except for the larger towns such as Kuala Kangsar, Sungai Petani and

Tapah, which have more wide-ranging economic resources, the smaller towns have to deal with a challenging situation. The economic fabric of most of these towns has been badly affected and, consequently, some of them have gone into decline, thus negatively impacting the livelihood of their residents. In an extreme case, the small town of Kepadang, located south of Ipoh, has virtually ceased to exist because of such a situation.

In the U.S.A., studies had been conducted to evaluate the impact of highways on towns. Kockelman, Srinivasan, and Handy (2001) found that there were both positive and negative impacts of highways. However, the impacts on small towns were mostly negative. The most significant explanation was the shift of traffic to the highways. Similarly, a study conducted by Handy et al. (2001) found out that highway relief routes could have both positive and negative impacts on urban communities. Positive effects included reduced traffic through the town resulting in a decrease in emissions, noise and safety issues. The reduced traffic flow, however, impacted negatively on businesses sited along the old route and downtown areas that depended on intercity traffic. Most of the businesses concerned included convenience stores, motels and restaurants (Babcock & Davalos, 2004). The results and implications of these seminal American studies are also applicable to our Malaysian towns. The affected towns attempt to revitalize themselves in various ways, utilizing different initiatives, including that of tourism development.

Besides the above, there are numerous issues related to the causes of urban decline and they were reviewed in the next chapter. Issues that arise as a result of urban decline are also varied. It is inevitable, however, that urban degeneration will usually be accompanied by social problems such as urban crime, unemployment, gentrification, and

the loss of a sense of community. Confronted with such issues, especially in the older and declining towns, local governments have to strategize to curb further urban degeneration and to revitalize their downtowns.

Urban revitalization is generally a long-term process. It typically takes a minimum of five years but, usually, a much lengthier time span is needed to realize the results. Meanwhile, disruptions may set in at any time and for whatever reason. Therefore, a most crucial factor is the choice of a suitable revitalization approach. Incidentally, an approach that has been gaining popularity and momentum worldwide is that of urban revitalization driven by tourism development. Such an approach is particularly meaningful owing to the fact that tourism is the world's largest industry and every town would do better economically if it were to host tourists. Furthermore, Galdini (2007) considered tourism as one of the most significant social forces in today's world owing to the fact that it has enormous international and geopolitical importance. Moreover, a town that is tourist friendly will naturally be good for its own residents.

A touristic town has well-developed infrastructure and public utilities such better streets, public transport, shopping malls, and entertainment outlets that residents can use and feel pride of ownership. As for economic benefits, the townsfolk have opportunities for employment in the form of jobs in hospitality and tourism, such as business ventures in hotel, tour agency, transport, and related enterprises. With the flow of cash into the town, the standard of living of the residents will rise. Furthermore, in relation to tourism ideals, the environment will be enhanced, resulting in clean air and water, and green open

spaces, thus providing conditions for healthy and stress-free living. Any citizen would be happy and proud to call such a place his hometown

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Urban degeneration has negatively impacted the lives of numerous Malaysians who live in declining towns. It is a serious issue as it negatively affects the health, lifestyle, and livelihood of the citizens. In recent years, there has been a call, both globally and locally, for greater awareness in promoting a greener environment and a heightened sense of community in human settlements (Ahmad & Ahmad, 2009; Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011; Thompson, 2004). Regarding this matter, the Malaysian National Urbanization Policy of 2006 highlighted the problematic issues of declining Malaysian towns. These issues included environmental pollution, infrastructure decay, traffic congestion, brownfields, depletion of inner city attractions, lack of social amenities, and shortage of green areas. It stressed that the inevitable result was a degradation in the quality of life of the urban community (Ministry of Housing and Local Governance, 2006).

In this context, therefore, this study is a useful attempt to review the literature available and to identify the more effective strategies for revitalizing declining towns. Each strategy shall fulfil two criteria: firstly, it should be a tourism development strategy; and, secondly, it should be suited for developmental purposes in small-size Malaysian towns. The acquirement of these particular strategies could be the initial step towards bridging the gap in the knowledge. Most importantly, the knowledge gained can be considerably utilized in arresting the issues of urban decline in our local context. Equally

important, it can help to revitalize our declining towns and turn them into vibrant urban centres as we head towards developed nation status in 2020.

1.4 Research Objective

This study aims to evaluate and identify appropriate and workable tourism development strategies that can function as catalysts, working hand-in hand with urban revitalization initiatives, in revitalizing declining towns. The research objectives are as follows:

- (i) To investigate and ascertain the reasons and causes for the decline of towns
- (ii) To identify and appraise functional and practical tourism development strategies that are appropriate and beneficial for revitalizing small-size Malaysian towns
- (iii) To formulate a practical and workable model for revitalizing small-size Malaysian towns through the application of tourism development strategies

1.5 Research Questions

This study aims to address 3 research questions. They are inter-related and point the way towards the development of a useful end product – an urban revitalization model.

- (i) Why did towns decline?
- (ii) What tourism development strategies would be effective in revitalizing small-size towns?
- (iii) How would a model be proposed for revitalizing small-size Malaysian towns by using tourism development strategies as a catalyst?

1.6 Research Design

This study focuses on small-size towns with populations of between 10,000 and 100,000 people. These small towns are placed at the lowest levels of the urban hierarchy system, as illustrated in Table 1.1. These small towns can function as transitional towns, being placed among large and medium cities, and can help in reducing urban-urban and rural-urban migration. This is a good reason for the government to continue to develop these small-size towns (Yaakob, Masron, & Masami, 2010). The reason for electing to focus on small-size towns is that they fall within the scope of this modest study whereas larger towns will entail more resources for a similar study to be undertaken.

Table 1.1 The Urban Hierarchy and Population Ranges

	Urban Hierarchy	Population Range
1	National Growth Conurbation	2.5 million and above
2	Regional Growth Conurbation	1.5 – 2.5 million
3	Semi-Regional Growth Conurbation	0.5 – 1.5 million
4	State Growth Conurbation	300,001 – 500,000
5	District Growth Conurbation	100,001 – 300,000
6	Major Settlement Centre	30,001 – 100,000
7	Minor Settlement Centre	10,000 – 30,000

Source: (Ministry of Housing and Local Governance, 2006)

The coastal town of Lumut had been selected as the geographical setting for this qualitative study. It is a typical small-size Malaysian town with a population of 55,590 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2010). It is in need of revitalization, as officially stated by the Municipality of Manjung within which jurisdiction it is located. Moreover, the choice of this particular town for the study was considered appropriate because the

authorities had planned to revitalize the town by developing it into a premier tourism town. (Furthermore, Lumut belongs to the district of Manjung, the fastest growing district in the state of Perak. Manjung is designated as the “Perak Silver Coast” or “Zon Ekonomi Eklusif Manjung” in the master plan of the local authorities. It is also considered as Perak’s “Economic Capital” owing to the rapid development that is going on. Industrialization is enhanced by the strategically located Lumut Port Industrial Park and the Lekir Bulk Terminal. Main catalysts for economic growth include oil palm and rubber plantations, prawn farming, bird nest production, tourism, the setting up of the Royal Malaysian Navy base and Vale, the Brazilian iron ore palletizing giant.

The participants in the came from as representative a cross-section of the population as possible. The most important informants included government officials, especially those in charge of town-planning and tourism-planning. For example, the penghulu of Manjun was included in order to gain a deeper insight into the developmental plans of the government. Other important stakeholders included the management of private sector enterprises such as Outward-Bound Malaysia, hotels, condominiums, souvenir shops and restaurants. Being a naval town, informants included navy personnel. Tourists and local residents were also included as participants.

The instrument used to collect the data was a semi-structured questionnaire. It was based on a list of ten tourism development strategies that had been selected from the literature review. The instrument was pilot-tested and refined before use. An invitation letter was posted to every prospective participant requesting for an interview. This was accompanied by an email communication, wherever possible, followed by a telephone

call. All interviews were recorded on MP3, with the permission of the participants. Data was collected until a point when further interviews did not yield any fresh information. The data was transcribed at the earliest opportunity. It was then analysed and the findings discussed. Based on the findings and the literature review, an attempt was made to develop a model for the revitalization of small-size Malaysian towns in the context of tourism development. This was followed by sections on conclusions and recommendations.

1.7 Significance of the Study

It is important to determine the answer to the gap in the knowledge, as identified in Section 1.2. The knowledge gained helps in improving the lives of the people who live in the declining and derelict towns. After these towns have been revitalized, the townsfolk will be able to enjoy better amenities and better lifestyles. To achieve this purpose, the study aims to propose a model for the revitalization of declining small Malaysian towns. Ten different tourism development strategies were selected from the literature available for the purpose of urban revitalization. The emphasis, in this context, is on three main elements: firstly, the strategies have to be agreeable with local Malaysian conditions; secondly, they have to be applicable to small-size towns; and, thirdly, they have to follow tourism development principles. The contents and usefulness of these ten urban revitalization strategies can be regarded as a small contribution to the body of knowledge. They formed the basis for the proposed model which can be used as reference material by urban authorities to make better decisions in revitalizing their towns.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Whereas there are a variety of strategies for urban revitalization projects such as brownfield redevelopment and heritage conservation to enhance the quality and effectiveness of town planning initiatives, the scope of this study does not cover site-specific designs or detailed technical designs of town-planning projects. Instead, this study intends to pursue a broader perspective of how tourism development fits into the big picture of urban revitalization in order to revitalize and improve the town through the development of an attractive and vibrant urban environment, and thus further strengthen the economic, social and environmental vitality of the town.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Key concepts in this project include towns and cities, urban decline, urban revitalization and sustainable development. Because several different definitions can be available for each of these terms, it necessary to state the meaning of each term as used in this study.

(i) Towns and Cities

Churchill (1953) observed that a town or city is a place where people congregate to earn a living and where they become interdependent due to a high level of occupational specialization. Similarly, Rose (1967) pointed out that a city is a convenient form of settlement for the conducting of most social activities, besides agriculture, but is especially evident in the cases of manufacturing and commerce. In Malaysia, the 1947 census

defined the term “urban”, and villages with populations of 1,000 or more were considered urban areas. The definition was expanded in the 1957 census to include local council areas, town board areas, town council areas, municipalities, new villages and villages with 2,000 inhabitants or more (Fell, 1960). During the 1970 census, towns with a population of 10,000 or more were considered urban areas (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 1977). However, the 1991 and 2000 census redefined urban areas as gazetted areas that, together with their adjoining built-up areas had a combined population of 10,000 or more (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 1995, p. 29).

(ii) City Centre and Town Centre

These general terms refer to a central urban area where major commercial, administrative, political, educational and cultural institutions are located. These establishments serve the town and its hinterland. Perenyi (1973) pointed out that it is a delimited area accessible from any part of the settlement because its location is related to the town’s transportation network and to its residential and industrial areas.

(iii) Central Business District

Although the term, “Central Business District” (CBD), though commonly used, has no standard meaning, various useful references have been attached to it. For instance, as pointed out by Park and Burgess (1984), the CBD is the core area especially for business and commercial activities which are clustered together to make full use of their networking and communication advantages as well as having the highest land value.

Furthermore, the essential CBD functions, as observed by Murphy and Vance (1954), appear to be the retailing of goods and services for gain and the conducting of various office functions.

(iv) Downtown

Bird (1997) observed that this popular American term, “downtown”, is useful because it is vague enough to describe the CBD, the urban core, and the inner city, and offers an estimation of relative distances from the periphery to the urban centre. This term could also refer to the original urban core, based on commerce, plus any urban core encroachment onto former residential areas. According to Wolf (1974), however, downtowns are those older business districts enclosed by mixed commercial and residential buildings.

(v) Urban Sprawl

Sprawl is the increased development of land in suburban and rural areas outside of their respective urban centres (“The definition of sprawl,” 2010). It refers to the shift of development from urban places, to rural places, and is known, simultaneously, as both urban sprawl and rural sprawl. Striker (2013) pointed out that a major cause of urban sprawl was the lack of regional planning by the authorities, resulting in haphazard developments on the outskirts of urban areas. A proper regional plan would have created a harmonious community. Another major cause of urban sprawl is population growth.

As an area's population grows, communities will spread farther away from the urban centres. This results in one of the biggest problems of sprawl as the government agencies responsible for building schools, hospitals, markets and providing amenities to support the new, far-flung communities will have to incur higher expenditure, eventually translating into higher taxes. Hoyt (2013) listed numerous negative impacts of sprawl that included environmental devastation such as the loss of forests, parks and animal habitats, and water and air pollution, longer commutes to workplaces, and an automobile-based lifestyle which was noted as a major cause of obesity and poor health.

(vi) Urban Decline

The term “urban decline” refers to an urban situation where there are undesirable changes such as job losses accompanied by growing unemployment, social exclusion, physical decay and worsening living conditions (Downs, 1999). It is commonly used simultaneously with the terms “urban decay”, “urban rot” and “urban blight”. Urban decline generally refers to the negative situation resulting from a town's economic, social and environmental problems. Town residents migrate out of town due to unemployment as industries fail and businesses close or relocate to the suburbs.

As noted by Middleton (1991), this phenomenon especially applies to the younger and more skilled urban residents as they migrate to find better paying jobs in other communities. Investment and development move elsewhere and land and other properties are abandoned while housing accommodation decreases. Meanwhile, there is a surge in

social problems especially urban crime, and the onset of environmental degradation such as urban pollution related to air, water and land resources.

(vii) Urban Revitalization

Urban revitalization has emerged as an effective response to urban decline. However, various other terms have also been used to describe this redevelopment process, such as “regeneration”, “renewal”, “reconstruction”, “restoration”, “rehabilitation”, “refurbishment”, “rejuvenation”, “renaissance”, “renovation”, and “neighbourhood renewal”. More commonly used, the term “urban regeneration” usually refers to an initiative to restore investment, employment and consumption to declining towns and to enhance the quality of life of the residents.

However, Holcomb and Beauregard (1981) preferred to add “growth” and “progress” to the definition which they then referred to as “urban revitalization” and stated that urban revitalization implied growth, progress, and infusion of new economic activities onto stagnant or declining cities. Roberts (2000) summed it up by defining “urban revitalization” as a comprehensive and integrated vision and action which led to the resolution of urban problems and which sought to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that had been subjected to change. This definition is more encompassing and includes the issue of sustainable development.

(viii) Sustainable Development

The Brundtland Report, released by the United Nations in 1987, defined sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Sustainable development comprises three independent and mutually reinforcing pillars which are referred to by the United Nations 2005 World Summit Outcome Document as economic development, social development, and environmental protection (The United Nations General Assembly, 2005). In relation to urban revitalization, all three main components of sustainable development, should be given equal emphasis to ensure that the sustainability initiatives are successful.

1.10 Thesis Organisation

Chapter One serves as the introduction to the study whereby the historical and geographical backgrounds are mapped out. Chapter Two concerns the literature review which covers the subject of urban decline and revitalization. Chapter Three describes the methodology used in the case study. The results of the study are recorded in Chapter Four. Lastly, Chapter Five contains the discussion and conclusion aspects of the study.

1.11 Summary of Chapter

This chapter introduced the background of the study in a broad worldview as well as in our Malaysian context. The major goal of the study is to propose an urban revitalization model that can be used as a reference for revitalizing small-size Malaysian towns through tourism development. Having considered present day global and local circumstances, the tourism-led urban revitalization initiative can be considered the best partner in the urban revitalization process. The problem statement had been developed and the research questions constructed. The research design, comprising the study's research questions, the data-collection instrument, and the procedure to be followed, had been described. The significance of the study and its limitations had also been explained. This was followed by a definition of key terms used in the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Literature was reviewed through books, professional journals, academic articles, news reports and online research. This included theoretical work together with related empirical studies concerning the subject of this study. The literature review explored strategies to formulate plans for urban renewal through tourism development. It also helped in the design of research themes and research questions and to identify bodies of knowledge and point out useful research paths. Most importantly, it attempted to identify any previous studies that had been carried out concerning similar subject matter, and to determine whether there were any gaps in the knowledge that need to be bridged.

2.2 Urban Decline and Revitalization: Western Experience

Europe experienced immense industrial expansion and population growth for 200 years since the mid-18th century. This phenomenon coincided with the Industrial Revolution and was centered in areas near natural resources such as coal, iron and water. Urban growth impacted the demographic landscape creating pressure on social institutions, family life and employment, and caused gentrification and out-migration from towns. Industrial cities brought about air and water pollution, general environmental degradation, and the depletion of natural resources that fed the factories. Davidson and Lees (2005) pointed out that British urban areas suffered severe blight and decay in the 1970s and